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SPECIFICATIONS FOR KNOTTY WESTERN WHITE PINE VENEER FLITCHES

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Because of its many desirable properties, western white pine (Pinus monticola) is a wood of many uses. For years this species, with its purplish-red knots surrounded by a velvety pattern of concentric shadows, has dominated the knotty-pine-panel market. A good white pine log doesn't go very far when cut into 1-inch lumber, but when flitched and sliced into 1/16- and 1/20-inch veneer the resulting panels cover much more wall space and with a more pleasing effect. A few manufacturers are now producing this veneer.

The following specifications for knotty western white pine flitches were developed for one firm to be used in sawmills cutting this material. Since the industry is new these specifications are considered tentative and subject to current revision:

Length: From a minimum of 8 feet, in multiples of 8 feet up to three lengths, with the long lengths of 16 and 24 feet preferred. A trimming allowance of 5 inches shall be included for each 8-foot length.

Other dimensions: Face shall be minimum of 8 inches, or minimum-sized flitch shall square up to 8 inches. Larger flitches shall square up to maximum size possible to attain, provided faces conform to knot specification.

Knots: Shall be sound. Maximum diameter shall be 1 inch except that a few knots 1¼ inches in diameter will be admissible on larger flitches. The desirable distribution is about one knot in every 18 inches of the length of the flitch; however, groups of two to four knots are permissible provided they are not interlocked with excessive amounts of short grain. Knot concentrations are not permissible.

Logs yielding satisfactory slicing flitches are usually from the limby portion of the tree where knots are small, sound, and properly spaced. Logs cutting a high proportion of No. 2 Common lumber give highest flitch yields. Flitches with faces in excess of 12 inches are rare.

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